

recognized from the term itself, vegetables, fruits, fruit trees, crops, bulbs, flowers, grass, herbs, plants defined in taxonomy, and so on.--

[Please replace the paragraph bridging page 1 (lines 13-25) and page 2 (line 1) with the following rewritten text:]

--It is added by the inventors of the invention that the term "plant growth" includes increasing the amount of growth, increasing the weight of a plant on both sides of the aboveground and the underground. "Plant growth" also includes further increasing greenness of leaves in terms of SPAD, increasing the height of grasses, improving harvest or crop, increasing photosynthesis, accelerating growth of green cells, improving absorption of a fertilizer, increasing sugar content and ascorbic acid of leaves and fruit. In more detail, it extends to improving: gloss of leaves, rising-up of leaves, firmness of leaves, an increased thickness of leaves, firmness of stem, short joints of stem, thickness of stem, whiteness of root, the number of fine roots, vivacity or strength of grasses or trees, gloss of fruit, size of fruit, fruiting, color of fruit, etc.--

Please replace the 1st full paragraph on page 2, lines 3-19, with the following rewritten text:

--Various nutrient elements are necessary for growth of plants. It is known that a lack of some of the elements causes hindrance in the growth of plants. For example, the big three fertilizer components function as follows. Nitrogen is a component element of proteins, and phosphorus is a formation element of nucleic acid or phospholipid and further plays an important part in energy metabolism and synthetic or decomposing reaction of a substance. Potassium has a physiological action of substance metabolism or substance migration. If these main components are lacking, the growth of plants generally becomes poor. Calcium is an important component constituting plants and cells, and further plays an important part in maintenance of the balance of the metabolic system. The lacking state of calcium causes physiological troubles. Besides, various nutrients as follows are necessary for plants: magnesium, iron, sulfur, boron, manganese, copper, zinc, molybdenum, chlorine, silicon, sodium and the like.--

Please replace the 1st full paragraph on page 3, lines 5-16, with the following rewritten text:

--However, it is an important theme in agricultural production to promote the growth of agricultural plants and increase the yield per unit area to strive for an increase in income. Various plant

growth regulators have been developed and used to help meet this need. The plant growth regulators, the typical examples of which include gibberellin and auxin, are used to regulate growth reactions or form-producing reactions such as germination, rooting, expansion, flowering and bearing. When these regulators are used, a period or a concentration thereof for applying these regulators and a method of treating these regulators are complicated. Thus, the uses thereof are restrictive.--

Please replace the 2nd paragraph on page 18, lines 7-11, with the following rewritten text:

--Examples of phosphoric acid ester group-containing surfactants include alkyl phosphoric acid ester salts, alkylphenylphosphoric acid ester salts, polyoxyalkylene alkylphosphoric acid ester salts and polyoxyalkylene alkylphenylphosphoric acid ester salts.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-3, 5 and 9 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter disclosed therein.

Please amend the claims as follows:

Sub R
A₅

4. (Amended) The method as claimed in claim 8, which is the compound (2) represented by the formula (II) wherein n is zero to 20; R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 13 to 21 carbon atoms, X represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 22 carbon atoms, an alkenyl group having 2 to 22 carbon atoms, or a counter ion (when n is not zero, the counter ion is excluded).

6. (Amended) A plant-activating composition comprising a plant-activating agent and at least one of a surfactant and a chelating agent, *and optionally nutrient selection*, said plant-activating agent is a compound of formula (II), *is the active ingredient*

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A₆

wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 11 to 29 carbon atoms; X¹ represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 30 carbon atoms, an alkenyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms, or a counter ion; AO represents at least one group selected from oxyethylene, oxypropylene and oxybutylene groups and may be random or block; and n represents an average number of moles added and is zero to 30.

7. (Amended) The composition as claimed in claim 6, wherein the surfactant is selected from a nonionic surfactant, an anionic surfactant and an amphoteric surfactant.

8. (Amended) A method of activating a plant by applying a plant-activating agent to the plant, said plant-activating agent is capable of promoting growth of the plant by itself and is a compound of formula (II),



wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 11 to 29 carbon atoms; X^1 represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 30 carbon atoms, an alkenyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms, or a counter ion; AO represents at least one group selected from oxyethylene, oxypropylene and oxybutylene groups and may be random or block; and n represents an average number of moles added and is zero to 30.

Please add the following claims:

--10. (NEW) A plant-activating composition comprising a plant-activating agent and a fertilizer agent, said plant-activating agent is a compound of formula (II),



wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 11 to 29 carbon atoms; X^1 represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 30 carbon atoms, an alkenyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms, or a counter ion; AO represents at least one group selected from oxyethylene, oxypropylene and oxybutylene groups and may be random or block; and n represents an average number of moles added and is zero to 30; wherein when n is zero and X^1 is a counter ion, then R has an even number of carbon atoms.

Sub
B3
cont.

11. (NEW) The composition as claimed in claim 10, wherein n is not zero.

12. (NEW) The composition as claimed in claim 6, wherein the plant-activating agent is in an aqueous solution or aqueous dispersion and is in a concentration of 0.01 to 5,000 ppm.

13 (NEW) The composition as claimed in claim 10, wherein the plant-activating agent is in an aqueous solution or aqueous dispersion and is in a concentration of 0.01 to 5,000 ppm.

14. (NEW) The composition as claimed in claim 6, wherein the chelating agent is at least one selected from the group consisting of citric acid, gluconic acid, malic acid, heptonic acid, oxalic

acid, malonic acid, lactic acid, tartaric acid, succinic acid, fumaric acid, maleic acid, adipic acid, glutaric acid, polycarboxylic acid, potassium salt of a polycarboxylic acid, sodium salt of a polycarboxylic acid, an aliphatic amine salt of a polycarboxylic acid, ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA), nitrilotriacetic acid (NTA) and cyclohexanediaminetetraacetic acid (CDTA).

✓ 15. (NEW) ^{CEO} The composition as claimed in claim 6, wherein the composition comprises 10 to 20,000 parts by weight of the surfactant and zero to 10,000 parts by weight of the chelating agent per 100 parts by weight of the activating agent.

✓ 16. (NEW) ^{CEO} The composition as claimed in claim 10, wherein said composition comprises 10 to 5,000 parts by weight of the fertilizer component per 100 parts by weight of the activating agent.

X 17. (NEW) ^{nutrients are present in} The composition as claimed in claim 15, wherein the composition further comprises 10 to 5,000 parts by weight of other nutrients per 100 parts by weight of the activating agent.

X 18. (NEW) The composition as claimed in claim 16, wherein said composition further comprises 10 to 5,000 parts by weight of other nutrients per 100 parts by weight of the activating agent.-- } ^{as 17}